

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of operating a personal computer, comprising:
 - (a) determining whether a digital recodation of content that is readable by a hardware device in the personal computer is protected; and
 - (b) responsive to a determination that the digital recodation of content is protected, selectively limiting which software programs are permitted to access digital information from the digital recodation of content.
2. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 1, further comprising a step of implementing an administrative program to monitor a data stream between the hardware device and a top-level software program.
3. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 1, further comprising a step of implementing an administrative program to selectively control access to data from the hardware device.
4. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 1, wherein the digital recodation of content is provided in a first digital format, and wherein said step of selectively limiting which top-level software programs are permitted to access digital information from the digital recodation of content is performed by accessing said digital information with a conversion program and using the conversion program to convert the digital information into a second digital format.
5. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 4, wherein the second digital format is subject to a digital rights management protocol.
6. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 4, wherein the second digital format is more compressed than the first digital format.

7. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 4, further comprising the step of providing the digital recordation of content in the first digital format, the administrative program and the conversion program to the personal computer on an optical disc that is readable by the hardware device.

8. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 7, wherein the digital recordation of content in the first digital format is provided on a first session of the optical disc and wherein the conversion program and the administrative program are provided on a second session of the optical disc.

9. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 3, further comprising a step of instructing the administrative program to selectively lock or unlock access to data from the hardware device.

10. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 9, further comprising instructing the administrative program to unlock access to data from the hardware device by using an authorized player program that is enabled to securely play the digital recordation of content.

11. A copy protected digital source of content, comprising:

- a storage media;
- a digital work that is encoded in a first digital format on said storage media;
- administrative means on said storage media for installing an administrative program onto a personal computer that is constructed and arranged to selectively control access to data from said storage media; and

conversion means on said storage media for installing a conversion program onto the personal computer that will be permitted by the administrative program to convert the digital work to a second digital format for storage on the personal computer.

12. A copy protected digital source of content according to claim 11, wherein said storage media comprises an optical disc.

13. A copy protected digital source of content according to claim 12, wherein said optical disc comprises a compact disc, said digital work comprising an audio work that is encoded in standard Redbook format on a first session of the compact disc, said administrative means and said conversion means being provided on a second session of the compact disc.

14. A copy protected digital source of content according to claim 11, further comprising secure player means also provided on said storage media for installing a player program on to the personal computer that will enable a user to play the digital work directly from the first digital format.

15. A method of operating a personal computer, comprising:

(a) determining that a digital recodation of content has been inserted into a hardware device in the personal computer; and

(b) selectively limiting which software programs are permitted to access digital information from the digital recodation of content.

16. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 15, further comprising a step of implementing an administrative program to monitor a data stream between the hardware device and a top-level software program.

17. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 15, further comprising a step of implementing an administrative program to selectively control access to data from the hardware device.

18. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 15, wherein said step of selectively limiting which software programs are permitted to access digital information from the digital recordation of content comprises granting access to secure player software for playing the digital information, and wherein transmission of said digital information to said secure player software is encrypted.

19. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 15, further comprising a step of determining specific digital rights management license conditions that have been specified by a content provider of the digital information, and wherein said step of selectively limiting which software programs are permitted to access the digital information is performed by denying access to the digital information to software programs that will not enforce said license conditions.

20. A method of operating a personal computer according to claim 19, wherein said step of determining specific digital rights management license conditions is performed by extracting information relating to those conditions from the digital recordation of content.

21. A method of protecting a digital work; comprising:

restricting access to a digital work in a personal computer to at least one authorized computer program;

providing digital rights management licensing conditions to the authorized computer program that have been specified by a content provider of the digital work; and

accessing the digital work with the authorized computer program subject to the specified licensing conditions.

22. A method of protecting a digital work according to claim 21, wherein said step of restricting access to said digital work comprises a step of implementing an administrative program to selectively control access to data from a hardware device of the personal computer.

23. A method of protecting a digital work according to claim 21, wherein said digital work is provided on a digital recordation of content that is readable by a hardware device of the personal computer.

24. A method of protecting a digital work according to claim 23, wherein said step of providing digital rights management licensing conditions to the authorized computer program comprises extracting information relating to said conditions from said digital recordation of content.

25. A method of protecting a digital work according to claim 21, wherein said authorized computer program comprises a conversion program for converting the digital work to a file format that is governed by a digital rights management protocol, and wherein said conversion program is configured to ensure that said licensing conditions are specified in said file format.

26. A method of protecting a digital work according to claim 21, wherein said authorized computer program comprises a secure player program for playing the digital work, and wherein the digital work is transmitted to said secure player program in an encrypted communication.

27. A method of protecting a digital work according to claim 21, wherein said authorized computer program comprises a controlled copy program that is configured to permit at least one copy of the digital work to be made on a portable digital media subject to said licensing conditions.

28. A method of protecting a digital work that is stored on a portable digital storage media, comprising:

connecting said portable digital storage media to a personal computer;
determining with the personal computer that the digital work is copy protected;
denying access to the digital work by unauthorized computer programs;
obtaining licensing condition information pertaining to the digital work; and
using an authorized computer program on the personal computer to convert the digital work to a digital format that is subject to a digital rights management protocol in which said licensing condition information is specified.

29. A method of protecting a digital work according to claim 28, wherein said step of obtaining licensing condition information comprises extracting said licensing condition information from said portable digital storage media.